

## VOICES

i've been hearing voices calling me again.  
actually just today i heard one, in the early  
afternoon: i was upstairs changing the sheets on  
the bed and a voice came from downstairs somewhere,  
but i wasn't exactly sure where. i don't know what  
to think of this. they never really scare me, these  
voices; it's always a distant call, and when i go  
to it there is nothing there. it's not from  
the drinking that i hear these voices, no. i hear  
them when i am sober too. and it's always a  
female voice that i hear. i should mention  
this, not because it means anything to me, but  
it might mean something to you, although i  
cannot imagine what. recently i talked to the  
family who used to live in this old farmhouse.  
i had run into them at the supermarket.  
one of the children had something interesting  
to say: she told me that she had heard voices  
here. when she did her parents snickered  
and told me not to take her seriously.  
she told me this without me mentioning a word  
about the voices i had heard. and  
the voices always seem to use my whole  
first name. this makes me even more curious,  
since only my family uses my name this way.  
friends and acquaintances without fail  
will shorten it. and every so often i swear  
i can identify one of the voices. i'm  
convinced one of the voices belongs to  
the woman whom i lived with not too long ago,  
for over three years. but, i don't know  
how this could be the case, since i thought  
only the dead called out to you  
in this manner. and she is not dead,  
thank god. only yesterday i ran into her  
at the health food store at the little  
mall in town. she appeared as beautiful  
as ever. we talked for a brief spell.  
in all the time we've known each other  
we have not had a bitter word between us.  
anyway, it could not have been  
her voice that i've been hearing, or  
one of the voices. if she wanted  
to call me all she'd have to do  
is use the phone. the dead  
cannot do that. they can't use  
phones. not even  
pushbutton.

— Ronald Baatz

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